

Message Text

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SUBJECT: ARA WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS MARCH 8-15, 1978

1. PANAMA CANAL SENATE DEBATE: AT NOON ON THE EVE OF THE SENATE VOTE ON THE NEUTRALITY TREATY THE OUTCOME REMAINS UNCERTAIN. A NUMBER OF UNCOMMITTED SENATORS HAVE NOW DECLARED THEMSELVES AND WE ARE WITHIN ONE OR TWO VOTES OF THE SIXTY-SEVEN NEEDED. WE ARE CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC. THE PRESIDENT AND THE DEPUTY SECRETARY HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH VARIOUS SENATORS TO TRY TO ACCOMMODATE SOME OF THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE TREATY THROUGH SENATE RESERVATIONS THAT WE HOPE CAN ALSO BE ACCEPTED IN PANAMA. THESE RESERVATIONS, THOUGH, WILL STRAIN PANAMANIAN FOREBEARANCE. THE BALANCE IS A DELICATE ONE.

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2. HOUSE TESTIMONY : AMBASSADOR TODMAN APPEARED ON MARCH 9 AS A WITNESS BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH HELD HEARINGS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN NICARAGUA. SUBCOMMITTEE QUESTIONS INDICATED GENERAL SUPPORT FOR OUR PRESENT POLICY THERE.

3. MRS. CARTER TO MIAMI: MRS. ROSALYNN CARTER, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR TODMAN, OPENED THE TRADE FAIR OF THE AMERICAS IN MIAMI MARCH 8. SHE EMPHASIZED THE COMMITMENT OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO FREER TRADE AND GREATER ACCESS TO U.S. MARKETS FOR EXPORTS FROM DEVELOPING NATIONS, NOT ONLY RAW MATERIALS AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS BUT ALSO MANUFACTURED GOODS. SHE ENCOURAGED GREATER LATIN AMERICAN USE OF THE GSP. THE FAIR WAS JOINTLY SPONSORED BY THE CITY OF MIAMI AND THE OAS.

4. OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY SITE: URUGUAY'S INVITATION TO HOLD THE VIII OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN MONTEVIDEO HAVING BEEN REJECTED, THE SITE REVERTS AUTOMATICALLY TO WASHINGTON WHERE THE OAS ITSELF WILL ACT AS HOST. CONSENSUS HAS NOW BEEN REACHED ON THE DATE OF JUNE 21 FOR OPENING CEREMONIES TO BE FOLLOWED BY TWO DAYS OF INFORMAL DIALOGUES AMONG THE FOREIGN MINISTERS. THE SITE IS EXPECTED TO BE FORMALLY CONFIRMED BY THE OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL TODAY. HUMAN RIGHTS, OAS FINANCING AND OVERALL REFORM OF THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM ARE LIKELY TO BE KEY ISSUES AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

5. AIFLD GRADUATES: ON MARCH 8 AMBASSADOR TODMAN WAS THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKER AT A GRADUATION EXERCISE IN THE AFL-CIO AUDITORIUM FOR 80 SOUTHERN CONE LABOR LEADERS. THE THRUST
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OF HIS REMARKS WAS THE COMMITMENT OF THE USG TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS AND TRADE UNION FREEDOMS. BOTH THE AFL-CIO AND AIFLD ARE GIVING THE TALK WIDE COVERAGE THROUGH THEIR VARIOUS TRADE UNION PUBLICATIONS IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH.

6. BUREAU PREPARATION PROCEDURES FOR CHRISTOPHER COMMITTEE REVISED: THE BUREAU HAS STREAMLINED ITS PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE PREPARATION OF BRIEFING MATERIAL FOR CHRISTOPHER COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF ASSISTANCE PROPOSALS. THE GEOGRAPHIC DESKS IN CONJUNCTION WITH AID WILL HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PREPARATION OF MEMORANDA AND OTHER BRIEFING MATERIAL. THE PURPOSE OF THE MOVE IS TO RELIEVE ECP OF SOME OF THAT OFFICE'S WORKLOAD WHICH IS AFFECTED BY HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

7. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: WE ARE IN THE FINAL STAGES OF PREPARING THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARIES FOR TRANSMITTAL TO THE NSC. WE HAVE HAD ONE INTER-AGENCY MEETING AND WILL HAVE A SECOND NEXT WEEK. EVERYONE'S COOPERATION IN THIS PROCESS IS APPRECIATED.

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